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FIFTIETH SESSION

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SECOND COMMITTEE
9th meeting
held on
Thursday, 12 October 1995
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 9th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PETRESKI (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

later: Mr. STADTHAGEN (Nicaragua)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 101: INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING THE CONVENING OF A UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/50/479 and E/1995/69)

1. Ms. WILLIAMS-MANIGAULT (United States of America) said that migration was increasingly moving to the forefront of policy debates within and among States. The United States welcomed continued discussion of the issue and was actively involved in a variety of forums. It supported the work of the United Nations Commission on Population and Development and endorsed the work plan of the Commission adopted at its 1995 session. Her country's thinking on future actions would be based on the results of the Commission's work during its 1997 session devoted to international migration.

2. The United States had also supported the convening of a regional migration conference for the Commonwealth of Independent States and neighbouring States. Indeed, regional migration conferences could be a positive venue for exploring mutual solutions to migration issues provided they were well-focused and were based on a consensus among regional States and were likely to produce results. However, at a time of scarce resources, it would be premature and unwise to incur the expense of convening yet another global conference on social issues following the three others held since September 1994.

3. Time was needed to absorb and translate into action the commitments that Governments had undertaken at the Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing conferences. Moreover, since there was no global consensus on what to do about migration, a conference on the issue would accomplish little. Such a conference should be considered only after an assessment of progress on discussions of the issues in 1997.

4. Mr. PAIVA (International Organization for Migration (IOM)) said that the links between migration and development deserved to be further explored and better understood, since they would serve as a basis for revising internationally acceptable measures to address both the positive and the disruptive effects of international migration on individual countries and world society as a whole. The importance of the issue argued for early efforts to move the debate forward. However, it was up to Member States to decide on the timing, modalities and forums in which such debate should be held. Through international dialogue and cooperation, migration could be understood, dealt with and channelled so as to be a positive force. Conversely, it could be suppressed and develop a dynamic all its own.

5. IOM was implementing two broad categories of programmes. The first facilitated the immigration of foreign nationals whose skills were wanted and sought by receiving countries, while the second assisted developing country nationals who had acquired expertise and advanced training abroad and who wished to return to their regions of origin and contribute to development process there. The positive impact of planned and orderly migration on the development process in both industrialized and developing countries was obvious. On the other hand, large-scale unplanned and disruptive migration could have negative effects on society in both industrialized and developing countries.

6. Through its operations in over 70 countries, IOM fostered international understanding and dialogue to address the issues of migration through cooperative efforts. In that connection, it had expanded research on the causes and consequences of international migration. The project on emigration dynamics in four regions of the developing world financed by the United Nations Population Fund was part of that effort. His organization also tried to be a forum for intergovernmental discussion on current migration topics. It had thus sponsored international seminars on North-South migration, migration and development and trafficking in migrants.

7. He had been struck by the convergence of views in discussions on a possible conference on international migration and development. There was agreement that migration was a key item on the current international political agenda and that it merited strengthened international dialogue and cooperation. IOM believed that there were many viable options ranging from an international conference to smaller-scale meetings. In that regard, the process put in place to prepare a regional conference on the problems of refugees, displaced persons, other forms of involuntary displacement and returnees in the Commonwealth of Independent States and relevant neighbouring States could serve as a point of reference.

8. Mr. LOZANO (Mexico) said that migration was an intrinsic part of the development process. The increasing globalization of the world economy had led to increased international migratory flows which evolved independently of government decisions or policies. The question of migration was of great importance to his Government, since millions of people crossed the country's long borders with the United States of America.

9. The International Conference on Population and Development had constituted a major step forward in the discussion of international migration issues in relation to economic development. The need for better understanding of that question had been expressed at the Conference, which had also sought to deal with it in a more constructive manner. The documents presented at the Conference had demonstrated that international migration could have considerable positive effects on both the communities of origin and the receiving communities and that the migration of labour was basically triggered by a genuine demand for manpower which the labour force of the receiving country could not or did not wish to meet. History had shown that migrant labour had helped to develop many of the wealthiest regions of the planet.

10. A more thorough analysis was needed for a better understanding of the phenomenon of international migration and its implications, since a lack of understanding of the problem had led to growing and unnecessary xenophobic and racist attitudes. Reiterating his delegation's determination to shed more light on the scope and benefits of the problem and to intensify efforts to attain cooperation in that effort, he expressed support for the convening of regional meetings on migration with the participation of all international agencies and non-governmental organizations. Such regional conferences could help define possible terms of reference for an international conference on migration and development. They could be preceded by workshops which would concentrate on regional problems, and the studies generated by the workshops could form part of international documentation on the subject.

11. The migration of labour was not a panacea for development problems. The best response was to promote sustained economic growth and sustainable development. Mexico's interest lay in exporting goods and services and sharing opportunities for prosperity, not in losing its cherished human resources.

12. Ms. YANG Yanyi (China) said that in order for international migration to have a more positive impact on the countries of origin as well as the receiving countries, international cooperation should be strengthened on the basis of respect for sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs. Since discrimination against immigrants was on the rise in certain receiving countries, major goals in the international community's discussions and deliberations on the question of migration should include prevention of racism, ethnocentricism and xenophobia, the elimination in the receiving countries of discrimination against immigrants, respect for their cultures, religions and traditions and encouragement for their integration into the local economy and society. Migration had positive economic effects in the countries of origin as a result of remittances of money from emigrants back home. However, migration might have negative effects, such as the brain drain which adversely affected the countries of origin. The international community needed to address that issue in depth in order to seek an effective solution.

13. The Chinese Government was in favour of legal immigration and against illegal immigration. It advocated dialogue and cooperation on an equal footing among various countries in order to expand the advantages of international migration and avoid its disadvantages. China endorsed the statement of the representative of the Philippines on behalf of the Group of 77 that the international community should attach greater importance to the question of international migration and make concerted efforts to find a solution to the problem.

14. Mr. ABDELLAH (Tunisia) said that Tunisia wanted to foster a global vision of international migration and development between the countries of the North and those of the South. Migrants had an important role to play in the relations and multifaceted exchanges which should be established among peoples. Today, migration was a universal phenomenon which affected virtually all major regions of the world. The scope and the constant development of the migratory phenomenon must be taken into account in any cooperation and partnership scheme. In that connection, migrants played key roles in both receiving countries and countries of origin in the economic and cultural spheres. Therefore, in its cooperation agreements with Maghreb Union and European Union countries, Tunisia had given high priority to the cultural and human dimensions in relations of joint development, partnership and solidarity.

15. With respect to religious convictions and spiritual values, the basic rights of migrants should be respected. That was why the President of Tunisia had called for the adoption of a convention governing both the rights of migrants and the obligations of receiving countries. Migrants could serve not only as a catalyst for development but also as a bridge of understanding between peoples. It was therefore time for the United Nations to address the question of immigration and convene, before the end of the century, a conference on international migration and development. His delegation therefore hoped that such a conference would receive support from both countries of origin and

receiving countries and would be carefully prepared in order to ensure its success.

Mr. Stadthagen (Nicaragua), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

16. Mr. ZIAUDDIN (Bangladesh) said that the movement of population was a natural outcome of the quest for peace and prosperity. The world's productive resources were unevenly distributed, making it necessary to create a mechanism for orderly migrations for the common benefit. Market forces should be allowed to pool productive resources in accordance with supply and demand without the distortions in the labour market caused by the erection of artificial barriers to migration. Curiously, however, the nations which had benefited most from migration and those who had contributed the most migrants were reluctant to consider the opportunity that an orderly flow of migration could offer. Moreover, orderly migration must be promoted if trafficking in migrants was to be curbed. The global community must restore respect for migration as a constructive force in the economy. Over the long term, migrants often returned to their home countries in substantial numbers; thus, the issue should not be oversimplified by branding developing countries as the source and the developed world as the recipients of migrants.

17. The goals and objectives of a possible international conference on migration must be clearly identified and defined. Some basic issues that could be highlighted during the preparatory process included avoiding politicization of the issue, identifying the root causes of migration, facilitating the reintegration of returning migrants, respect for the rights of both documented and undocumented migrants, reunification of migrant workers with their families, respect for the cultural values of the migrants within their host countries and greater cooperation and dialogue to assist migrants in assimilating in their host societies. A preparatory process must be initiated at the national, regional and international levels, and greater involvement of regional and international organizations must be ensured.

18. Mr. GAMITO (Portugal) said that his country had experienced emigration for many years, and more recently was also becoming a receiving country. The Portuguese Government attached great importance to the protection of the rights and interests of its nationals abroad, and considered that one of the mainstays of government policy should be the increased social integration of documented immigrants. At the international level, it continued to support exchange and cooperation to improve the status of migrants and their families, and to fight against trafficking and exploitation. Migration policies should be established within the context of a global strategy.

19. Many of the problems of migration could be lessened if countries ensured that the human rights of everyone in all territories were respected, found ways to avoid major flows of migrants and countered the lack of information at the basis of many prejudices by finding points of mutual understanding with other peoples and regions of the world. The international community should recognize the value of the work of migrants and the importance of their presence, together with their families, for the development of the receiving countries as well as the countries of origin.

20. Mr. KAUSIKAN (Singapore) said that the root cause of international migration was lack of development. If given a choice, every country would want its people to stay and work at home. Poverty and lack of opportunity forced people to leave their families and risk the uncertainties of migrating overseas. Pure economic logic and market needs resulting from uneven levels of development dictated migrant flows between countries and regions.

21. The international community must ask itself what effect a United Nations-sponsored international conference on migration and development would have on those economic fundamentals. Current economic trends showed that international migration largely involved unskilled labour, while highly skilled workers remained in demand all over the world. The general global trend was towards a slackening of demand for unskilled workers, because advances in science and technology were making wealth creation increasingly dependent on knowledge rather than on inputs of labour or even natural resources. In a situation of weakening demand and growing supply, the basis for dealing with the question must be the domestic law of the host countries. Overly intrusive international regimes would risk a disruption in demand to the detriment of sending countries.

22. It might be prudent to focus on existing agreements reached at the International Conference on Population and Development or the World Summit for Social Development, rather than duplicate their efforts by creating a new regime. The ultimate solution, however, to the problems associated with international migration was development for the countries that export migrant labour. The international community should not allow itself to be distracted from that primary goal. Another United Nations conference on that subject might weaken existing United Nations development institutions and open developing countries to accusations of lack of focus and duplication of effort, which could increase pressure to cut back on development programmes. That was not an outcome any developing country would like.

23. Mr. ABDELLAH (United Republic of Tanzania) recalled that no agreement had been reached on the issue at the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council. He was disappointed that the Secretariat had not provided the Committee with a comprehensive report on the discussions which had taken place in Geneva.

24. Migration should not be seen as a panacea for lack of development: it was in the interest of developing countries to export goods, not citizens. The solution to the problem lay in cooperation and solidarity between countries of origin and receiving countries. Tanzania was among the countries directly affected by international migration; therefore, it fully supported the convening of an international conference on the subject.

25. Mr. RESHETNYAK (Ukraine) said that international migration acted as a barometer of the state of the world economy, showing up the unevenness of its development. Unregulated mass migrations were destabilizing and undesirable, which made it all the more important for the world community to agree on measures both to prevent significant migration flows and to provide humanitarian and social assistance. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 had resulted in thousands of people migrating from one region to another. Owing to its geographical position and stable political and social conditions, Ukraine had

become a refuge for many thousands of people from conflict areas. Over the past months there had been a significant increase in the number of illegal immigrants, particularly those making their way across Ukraine to the West, who stayed in Ukraine for an indefinite period and added to the economic burden and the crime problems of the country.

26. Another current difficulty for Ukraine was the return of the Crimean Tatars from central Asia, where they had been deported during the Second World War. Around 280,000 had already arrived and almost as many more were expected shortly. The Government, despite its economic crisis and acting virtually single-handedly, provided them with significant material assistance. Its resources were limited, however, and Ukraine looked forward to receiving help from other States and from international organizations in dealing with the problem.

27. Practical steps should be taken to regulate the flow of migrants in cooperation between sending, receiving and transit countries. Existing mechanisms of the United Nations and other international organizations formed a good basis for a realistic programme of action to provide legal help for fugitives and migrants, including those whose status was not regulated under international law. A regional conference on the matter was to take place in 1996, concentrating on the migrant problem in CIS and neighbouring States. Ukraine was confident that the results of the conference would be helpful in working out an effective programme of action to deal with uncontrolled migration in the region and to contribute to a wider understanding of the problem.

28. Ms. RAMIRO-LOPEZ (Philippines) said that, as reflected in document E/1995/69, only 43 Member States had responded to the survey on international migration, representing less than 25 per cent of the total number of Member States. The Group of 77 had assisted the Commission on Population and Development with the survey and had encouraged Member States to submit their responses. In her delegation's view, the Commission should have endeavoured to generate a more productive response. Her delegation suggested asking UNDP resident coordinators and other field offices of the United Nations system to coordinate with host countries in order to encourage greater response.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/C.2/50/L.2)

29. The CHAIRMAN recalled that, by its decision 1995/227 of 6 June 1995, the Economic and Social Council had recommended to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution entitled "Revision of the General Regulations of the World Food Programme and reconstitution of the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes as the Executive Board of the World Food Programme". The text of that draft resolution was contained in document A/C.2/50/L.2.

30. It was envisaged that the FAO Conference would adopt a parallel resolution at its twenty-eighth session on 27 October 1995. It could not, from a legal point of view, carry out its scheduled elections for members of the new Executive Board if the parallel resolution of the General Assembly had not yet come into force. Therefore, the Committee had been requested to take action on that draft resolution as soon as possible.

31. Ms. KELLEY (Secretary of the Committee) informed members that the last phrase of paragraph 6 of the draft resolution should read "as endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 1995/227 and by the Council of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations at its 108th meeting on 12 June 1995." In the third paragraph, the word "structure" should be replaced by "outcome".

32. Draft resolution A/C.2/50/L.2, as orally revised, was adopted.

AGENDA ITEM 102: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT (A/50/190-E/1995/73)

33. Mr. STOBY (Director, Department of Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development) said that the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 49/128 on the report of the International Conference on Population and Development focused on the question of requirements for international assistance and flow of financial resources, institutional follow-up issues and reporting procedures, and implementation by the specialized agencies and related organizations of the United Nations system, by the governing body of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and by the Commission for Population and Development.

34. On the subject of international assistance and flow of resources, the total cost of the population package in the Programme of Action was estimated at $17 billion in the year 2000, $18.5 billion in the year 2005, $20.5 billion in the year 2010 and $21.7 billion in the year 2015. It was tentatively estimated that up to two thirds of the cost would continue to be met by the countries themselves, with one third expected to come from external resources. The least developed countries and other low-income developing countries, however, would require a greater share of external resources on a concessional and grant basis. Assuming that recipient countries could generate sufficient domestic resources, the need for complementary resource flows from donor countries and international financial institutions would be on the order of $5.7 billion in the year 2000, $6.1 billion in 2005, $6.8 billion in 2010 and $7.2 billion in 2015. The report outlined the steps already taken by the Executive Director of UNFPA to hold consultations on mobilization of resources and to arrange regular global consultations.

35. With respect to Secretariat support and coordination arrangements for the United Nations system, he pointed out that the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) had convened the International Conference on Population and Development Inter-Agency Task Force pursuant to General Assembly resolution 49/128. The Task Force was designed to promote system-wide collaboration and implementation of the decisions of the Conference at the country level through the resident coordinator system. Guidelines had been issued for the latter to provide direction for integrated implementation of the Programme of Action and recommendations of the Conference and other recent United Nations conferences.

36. The working group on policy-related issues had produced a Common Advocacy Statement which had been endorsed by the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC). The statement sought to establish shared language for the

United Nations system and in following up on the Conference and other recent United Nations conferences and programmes of action. The working group on international migration would hold its first meeting on 19 October at the headquarters of the International Labour Organization, which served as its lead agency. The Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development was another similar follow-up organ.

37. Ms. RAMIRO-LOPEZ (Philippines), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development was a blueprint for development strategies that should be implemented in the context of the other results of international conferences such as the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the World Conference on Human Rights, the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women. Although its focus was on population, decision makers should consider the broad issues of and interrelationships between population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development, economic status and empowerment of women, and education and trade. The Programme of Action should not be treated in isolation.

38. With respect to the resources needed to implement population and development programmes in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, she said that innovative means of mobilizing resources would have to be devised. The consultative group on the mobilization of resources for the implementation of the Programme of Action, convened pursuant to resolution 49/128, had had its first consultations on 20 January 1995 with representatives of various multilateral and bilateral donor countries, the World Bank and regional financial institutions. However, the report of those consultations did not disclose whether any definitive strategies to generate adequate resources had been found. The question of expanding the Commission on Population and Development had led to an impasse during the substantive session of the Council in Geneva. She was in favour of increasing the number of countries represented on the Commission from 27 to 53, not only for the sake of transparency, but also to reflect growth in the membership of the United Nations.

39. The Group of 77 and China supported a distinct Executive Board for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to enable the latter to fulfil its important role and responsibility in the follow-up to the Conference and in the providing of technical and financial assistance required to help developing countries meet their own population and development needs. The Group had also encouraged the participation of population and development experts in the Board's deliberations.

40. Turning to Secretariat support and coordination arrangements for the United Nations system, she said that while she appreciated the efforts of various agencies and task forces involved in the implementation of development strategies adopted by developing countries, those agencies should not lose sight of the fact that the plans and actions were country-driven programmes and, therefore participation of the recipient countries in their formulation and implementation was essential.

41. The Group of 77 and China wished to express their reservation on the UNFPA proposal to redirect resources that had been committed to developing countries

which were doing comparatively well in their development efforts to countries which might require further assistance. The predictability of resources was taken into account in formatting strategies, and to implement such a propcsal would be counterproductive. She advocated maximizing technical and economic cooperation among developing countries in implementing the development programme. The decision of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board to consider those modalities as the first option towards fulfilment of objectives in socio-economic planning remained a valid concept. Indeed, it was likely to assume added importance in the future in view of the changes occurring in the international system and their impact on the traditional structure of multilateral technical cooperation.

42. Mrs. MENENDEZ (Spain), speaking on behalf of the European Union, drew attention to the Union's positions on implementation of the Programme of Action, as expressed at the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in Geneva and summarized in a paper distributed at the current meeting of the Committee. She reiterated her support for the important decisions taken at the Fourth World Conference on Women and emphasized the importance of ensuring an integrated and coordinated follow-up to all major international conferences.

43. Ms. YANG Yanyi (China), said that since the Cairo Conference, the Chinese Government had taken a number of follow-up measures. The integral adjustment and promotion of economic growth, social development, population, resources and environment had been adopted as important guidelines in China's eighth and ninth five-year plans, and the long-range plan for 3010 that were currently being formulated. Information about the Conference and its Plan of Action had been widely disseminated throughout the country, and efforts were being made to implement the goals identified at the Conference in order to solve China's population problem for the benefit of the people and future generations. The Chinese Government had formulated the Work Programme for Family Planning of China (1995 to 2000) and had established family planning policies and programmes linking citizens' rights with obligations and individual interests with those of society. A national conference would be held before the end of 1995 to share and publicize successful experiences combining family planning with economic development.

44. Although encouraging progress had been made in implementing the Programme of Action, two problems had emerged. Firstly, despite the fact that the Programme of Action recognized the sovereignty of each country in implementing its proposals in keeping with its national laws and development priorities, some people criticized the population policies of other countries in an attempt to impose their own will and moral values on them. Such criticism was not only an interference in the internal affairs of and sovereignty of other countries but also a barrier to international friendly cooperation and the smooth implementation of the Programme of Action. Irresponsible and harmful policy practices of that kind should meet with resistance from the international community. Secondly, implementation of the Programme of Action required not only efforts from Governments and peoples of various countries but also the support of relevant United Nations agencies. She welcomed the efforts made by the United Nations Commission on Population and Development, UNFPA and other organizations and agencies in promoting the implementation of the Plan of Action. However, she pointed out that the relevant United Nations agencies and

international organizations were confronted with unprecedented pressures and challenges. Changes in the functions of the United Nations Commission on Population and Development justified an expansion of that body. In fulfilling their respective functions, United Nations committees, programmes and funds should avoid focusing on certain issues to the exclusion of others.

45. Mr. PAIVA (International Organization for Migration (IOM)) said that chapter X of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development contained a comprehensive and balanced global migration policy framework which IOM had warmly welcomed. IOM had made every effort to incorporate the principles underlying the Programme of Action into its own planning. The strategic plan which it had started to elaborate in 1993 had integrated the relevant elements of the Programme of Action.

46. An information sheet linking the IOM strategic plan with the Programme of Action had been issued and shared with other international agencies. In that context, IOM welcomed the opportunity to participate in the Inter-Agency Task Force working group on international migration. Such collaboration would be required among the various intergovernmental agencies whose mandates called for follow-up action to the International Conference on Population and Development. A programme of action, however, did not in itself produce action. More than words would be needed to give effect to the results of the Conference, and IOM had made and would make significant efforts to continue a dialogue within its membership on the conclusions of the Conference.

47. Mr. ACHA (Peru) said that, as part of its population policy, his Government was applying an integrated family-planning strategy and had approved an extraordinary budgetary provision for that purpose. A major national campaign had been launched to disseminate information on legally authorized methods of family planning. Those methods were within reach of all families wishing to use family planning irrespective of social class, and without rewards or incentives being offered by the State. Peru's national population policy was modern and rational. Nothing in that policy or in the supporting legislation constituted a violation of the right to life, which was guaranteed from conception. Peru would continue to count on the support of international agencies in developing and implementing its national population policy.

48. He supported the idea of a separate Executive Board for UNFPA in the light of the increasing importance and scope of population issues. The report under discussion (A/50/190) should have taken into account the important deliberations of the annual July session of the Executive Board of UNDP and UNFPA and in particular, resolution 95/15 on priority programmes and the direction of UNFPA in light of the Cairo Conference. He expressed his total support for the activities of UNFPA and for concentration of basic spheres of activities which would enable the fund to define the strategic focus for its programmes and to make the most of the comparative advantage and experience in the field that it enjoyed in dealing with population and development issues.

49. Mr. KEBEDE (Ethiopia) said that as the third most populous country in Africa, his country attached paramount importance to following up the results of the International Conference on Population and Development. The international community should scrupulously implement the recommendations that had emerged from the Conference. Recipient and donor countries should enhance their dialogue bilaterally and multilaterally on the basis of genuine interdependence and shared but differentiated responsibility.

50. His delegation was grateful to the international community for the increased assistance given, in relative terms, to the United Nations Population Fund following the recommendations of the Conference. Such assistance should not, however, be temporary and limited in scope, but should be further buttressed through substantial increments. Ethiopia was a country affected by an exceedingly high fertility rate, high infant, child and maternal morbidity and mortality rate, low nutritional status, low per capita income and a declining food self-sufficiency ratio. The quality of the environment was also rapidly declining and natural resources were being depleted, partly as a result of the high rate of population growth. The Government was determined to search for a lasting solution to such problems within the framework of implementing the Programme of Action of the Conference.

51. A year before the convening of the Conference Ethiopia had launched a population policy, the main objective of which was to bring down the level of fertility to a manageable level as soon as possible. It aimed at decreasing the total fertility rate from the current 7.7 children per woman to 4 by the year 2015. To that end, the contraceptive prevalence rate was to be raised from the current 4 per cent of eligible people to 44 per cent by 2015. The Government had also made every effort to publicize the Programme of Action both among the general public and among governmental, non-governmental and other concerned bodies.

52. The population policy, which was congruent not only with the Programme of Action of the Conference but also with resolutions adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, aimed at the broadest possible participation by the people. The national Population Council, chaired by the Prime Minister, oversaw the progress and outcome of population programmes throughout the country. There was a National Office of Population in the Prime Minister's office which served as the Secretariat of the Population Council; and that structure was replicated at federal and zonal levels. Following the Conference some modifications to the national Plan of Action for the implementation of the population policy had been seen to be necessary and the Government had therefore set up the national Multisectoral Technical Committee to bring the Plan of Action into line with the Programme of Action.

53. A population policy would hardly be successful unless women were empowered economically, politically and socially. A Women's Affairs Office had therefore been established in the Prime Minister's office and efforts had been made to coordinate the activities of that Office with those of the National Office of Population. The role of non-governmental organizations in population activities was important but they should act in accordance with national policies and should recognize their distinct roles and responsibilities. The Government was encouraging their representation on the Population Council and the Multisectoral

Technical Committee. The Government was committed to supporting national population activities financially, technically and politically. Since the country's infrastructure had been devastated by 10 years of civil war, however, assistance was also needed from the international community and the United Nations system, for whose continuing help his country was grateful.

54. Mr. RESHETNYAK (Ukraine) said that the year that had passed since the International Conference on Population and Development had made it possible to see the issues involved in a clearer light. One such was the important role played by the Economic and Social Council. He believed that the reorganization of the Council's work should be aimed at strengthening its coordinating role. A monitoring and control mechanism should be set up to enable it to implement the decisions of the Conference and to make more effective use of other organizations of the United Nations system.

55. How the Programme of Action of the Conference was implemented would show whether the United Nations could translate decisions into reality and would indicate to what extent international conferences on social and economic issues were effective. The first steps that had been taken following the Conference had been promising. The inter-agency mechanism for the implementation of the Programme of Action bid fair to become the only focal point within the United Nations system that could provide the necessary coordination and avoid duplication with other bodies. He welcomed the creation of four working groups for the Commission on Population and Development, but supported the proposal that a fifth should be formed on issues of reproductive health, considering that in 1998 the Commission would be considering the questions of reproductive rights and reproductive health.

56. He noted that the final documents of the Conference and of other recent conferences had mentioned the problems of countries with economies in transition. That showed the growing international awareness that problems of social and economic development could not really be solved without taking into account the interests of such countries. In that context he urged that the adjustments to programmes and activities of the specialized agencies, mentioned in General Assembly resolution 49/128, paragraph 14, should be made as soon as possible. He also hoped that help for such countries would not be given on the "residual" principle. Such help would be most useful in the form of resident coordinators in the field, with considerably expanded responsibilities. A larger role should also be played by United Nations regional commissions in the interests of regional cooperation.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.

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General Assembly

FIFTIETH SESSION

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SECOND COMMITTEE
10th meeting
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Friday, 13 October 1995
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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 10th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PETRESKI (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

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AGENDA ITEM 102: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 102: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/50/190-E/1995/73)

1. Mr. FLORENCIO (Brazil) said that his delegation supported the views on the item expressed by the representative of the Philippines on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development presented challenges that called for an immediate response from individuals, Governments, international financial organizations and the international community as a whole. Because the world's population continued to grow quickly and per capita international cooperation was declining, the financing of the Programme of Action was a matter of grave concern. The donor community placed considerable emphasis on the mobilization by countries of their domestic resources. He wished to underscore the importance of complementary resources from donor nations and financial institutions and agreed with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) that a report on such resource flows should be prepared on an annual basis.

2. Given the sensitive nature of population issues, it was essential when dealing with initiatives and projects, to take fully into account the sovereign right of each State to formulate and implement its own policies and to ensure the inalienable right to development. Those factors must prevail in decisions relating to the financing of any initiative. His Government was committed to implementing the Programme of Action and had established a National Commission on Population and Development which was responsible for follow-up action to the Conference.

3. His delegation favoured the establishment of a separate executive board for UNFPA in the belief that it would provide greater flexibility to, and enhance the governance of, the Fund and thereby prove more beneficial to developing countries. It was a matter of concern that the joint United Nations Development Programme(UNDP)/UNFPA Executive Board was expected to devote 10 days, at most, to population issues during the current year. Furthermore, the membership of the Commission on Population and Development should be expanded to 53 States and the Population Division should be strengthened in order to enable it to discharge its responsibilities arising out of the implementation of the Programme of Action. He underscored the importance which the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean attached to the development of initiatives within the scope of the Programme of Action and their belief that their efforts should be complemented by increased support from the international community. The region lagged far behind in the allocation of concessional financial resources.

4. Mr. AYEWAH (Nigeria) said that his country, which had a large population, attached considerable importance to the question of population and its implications for economic growth and development. His delegation was grateful to the Executive Director of UNFPA for her tireless efforts to conceptualize some of the basic parameters of population growth and their impact on society. It also appreciated the work of the Inter-Agency Task Force on the Implementation of the Programme of Action and associated itself with the

statement made by the representative of the Philippines in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of 77 and China.

5. In keeping with its belief that managed population growth should complement and serve as a basis for sustainable development, his delegation endorsed the objectives of General Assembly resolution 49/128 and hoped that it would be fully implemented. While it was true that national Governments had the primary responsibility for the formulation and implementation of population policies, the support of the international community was essential for their implementation. His delegation therefore hoped that the specialized agencies would ensure a collaborative and coordinated approach to the implementation of the Programme of Action.

6. His delegation supported the enlargement of the Commission on Population and Development to 53 members, not only in the light of the ongoing restructuring of the United Nations system but also to ensure the broader participation of Member States, and of developing countries in particular.

7. Mr. HADJI KARIM DJABBARY (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the International Conference on Population and Development had successfully reconciled divergent views on the interrelationship between population, development and the environment stemming from diverse religious, ethical and cultural positions. The full and expeditious implementation of the Programme of Action depended on the provision of substantial external resources to supplement the mobilization of domestic resources, as well as equal consideration and treatment of all the recommendations contained in the Programme of Action. That approach should guide the activities of all entities concerned with the implementation of the Programme of Action.

8. Turning to paragraphs 8-10 of document A/50/190, he said that his delegation welcomed the convening of consultations on the mobilization of resources for the implementation of the Programme of Action and believed that the resources to be generated by that process or through other mechanisms should be specifically devoted to the implementation of relevant programmes in all developing countries.

9. His delegation agreed that the membership of the Commission on Population and Development should be increased to 53 States in order to reflect the reforms under way in the United Nations system and to improve the effectiveness of its activities. It also agreed that there was sufficient reason to establish a separate executive board for UNFPA.

10. Mr. KUDRYAVTSEV (Russian Federation) expressed the hope that the question of whether the membership of the Commission on Population and Development should be enlarged would be resolved by the end of the year. His delegation did not believe that it was necessary to establish a separate executive board for UNFPA, since the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board's work was proceeding smoothly. Some streamlining was needed to ensure effective working relationships among the various entities participating in population-related activities.

11. At its current session, the Second Committee should help to finalize organizational arrangements for updated United Nations activities in the

population field. His delegation looked forward to a full discussion of the progress accomplished at all levels, with an emphasis on substantive questions, including new measures to be taken with respect to the harmonization and monitoring of population activities. The Commission on Population and Development should concentrate on preparing practical recommendations for improving international cooperation on population issues. His delegation endorsed the suggestion by UNFPA that reports should be prepared each year on the financial resources allocated for the implementation of the Programme of Action at the national and international levels. The progress made by all partners involved in the field of population and development, both within and outside the United Nations system, should be evaluated regularly in order to permit the timely adjustment of policies with a view to a more balanced and integrated approach to assessing progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action.

12. His delegation attached considerable importance to more productive interaction between the Commission on Population and Development, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly with the Inter-Agency Task Force and welcomed the coordination efforts already made to that end. The Task Force should ensure the transparency of its work and should maintain close contact with Member States. He underscored the important role which the Task Force played as the Organization's link to partners outside the United Nations system.

13. He emphasized the importance of clear national reporting requirements for the successful implementation of the Programme of Action, and noted that the main role of the General Assembly in the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development should be to bring deficiencies and problems to light and devise appropriate recommendations to eliminate them.

14. Mr. OKANIWA (Japan) said that his delegation considered the adoption of the Programme of Action a significant achievement. Together with the results of other recent United Nations conferences, the Programme of Action could substantially improve the quality of life for all humankind. The General Assembly, in particular, had a specific role to play in maintaining the momentum which the International Conference on Population and Development had generated by highlighting both the progress in and the obstacles to achieving the Programme's goals.

15. He supported the recent UNFPA Executive Board decision to focus on reproductive health, population policy and advocacy. UNFPA should reinforce its capability in line with its resources. Furthermore, the emphasis on South-South cooperation, including triangular cooperation, was of particular importance and the efforts of UNFPA in that regard should be strengthened.

16. It would be premature to establish a separate executive board for UNFPA since the advantages did not justify the consequent increase in expenses. He noted with satisfaction that the Commission on Population and Development was being revitalized, and said that, secretariat support for the Commission and other follow-up activities needed to be reinforced. Accordingly, his delegation welcomed the increase in personnel for the Population Division provided for in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997.

17. His delegation believed that a decision concerning the composition of the Commission was being unduly delayed in the Economic and Social Council; it was imperative to ensure the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the Commission. Financial resources to ensure the follow-up of the International Conference on Population and Development should be mobilized from all available sources. Japan, for its part, planned to provide a total of US$ 3 billion for population and AIDS as part of its official development assistance for the seven-year period from 1994 to 2000.

18. Ms. WILLIAMS-MANIGAULT (United States of America) said that the strong reaffirmation by the Fourth World Conference on Women of many of the concepts adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development should strengthen the resolve of nations to implement the Platform for Action adopted at the former Conference and the Programme of Action adopted at the latter. Action to support the empowerment of women was important in its own right and also integral to stabilizing population growth. Action must be taken at all levels in order to translate those documents into reality.

19. Her delegation did not believe that enlarging the membership of the Commission on Population and Development would enhance its effectiveness, since the quality of the representatives sent to the Commission was more important than their number. Nor did it believe that there was any need to establish a separate executive board for UNFPA. The joint UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board was working very effectively and UNFPA was doing an excellent job.

20. Mr. LOZANO (Mexico), referring to the requirements for international assistance and financial flows to implement the Programme of Action, emphasized the importance of the follow-up work to be carried out by the Commission on Sustainable Development vis-à-vis the progress achieved in meeting financial aid targets. He reaffirmed that the manner in which resources were allocated to various sectors must depend on the social, economic, cultural and political realities in each country and on its priorities.

21. His delegation favoured the establishment of a separate executive board for the United Nations Population Fund since that would enable the Fund more effectively to implement the Programme of Action and related activities and to provide technical and financial assistance.

22. In devising a new strategy for allocating resources in support of the implementation of the Programme of Action, UNFPA must comply strictly with the provisions of paragraph 14.14 of the Programme of Action on the criteria for allocation of external financial resources for population activities, the most significant of which was the principle of the universality of international cooperation of the United Nations system.

23. His delegation was in favour of enlarging the membership of the Commission on Population and Development to 53 in order to enable it to discharge its responsibilities more effectively. Recognizing the interdependence of population, development and environmental issues, his Government had recently launched a five-year national population plan, which was an integral part of the country's economic and social development strategies and programmes.

24. Mr. TANASESCU (Romania) said that since implementation at the national level was crucial to meet the goals set at the International Conference on Population and Development, the national reports which had been submitted by some countries during the preparatory process of the Conference, could be used as a basis for the adoption of national programmes consistent with the Programme of Action. Those countries which had not yet presented such national reports should be assisted to do so.

25. Implementation of such national programmes should be based on three key elements: first, cooperation between the various governmental departments, which required precise delimitation of the responsibilities of each department; second, partnership between government and non-governmental organizations; and third, periodic assessment of the results. Concerning the latter aspect, there was a need to improve the statistical instruments. In that regard, common studies undertaken by the Statistical Commission and the Commission on Population and Development could indicate the most appropriate statistical indicators that reflected the new trends and processes.

26. Regional cooperation and assistance from the specialized agencies of the United Nations were crucial to the implementation of the Programme of Action at the regional level. In that regard, he drew attention to a workshop which Romania had hosted earlier in the year on the implementation of the Programme of Action in countries with economies in transition from Central and Eastern Europe as well as the Commonwealth of Independent States. The workshop had revealed certain serious problems in family planning and reproductive health, two crucial areas where the countries of the region needed assistance from the specialized agencies of the United Nations. As a result, the Executive Director of UNFPA had proposed and the joint UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board had approved, the establishment of two UNFPA offices, in Bucharest and Tirana, which would channel assistance in those two areas to countries in the region. The office in Romania would also monitor UNFPA activities in Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Republic of Moldova, Poland, the Russian Federation, Slovakia and Ukraine.

27. Mr. KIM (Republic of Korea) noting the commendable efforts which had already been made to implement the Programme of Action, said that his delegation endorsed the terms of reference and mandates of the Commission on Population and Development; the topic-oriented and prioritized multi-year work programme was an effective approach. Discussions concerning the establishment of a separate executive board for UNFPA should, in his delegation's opinion, take place within the context of ongoing efforts to restructure the United Nations system in the economic, social and related fields.

28. The Republic of Korea attached great importance to the global population issue and had made efforts to increase its contribution in that regard. After the Cairo Conference, it had sponsored jointly with UNFPA a population symposium on gender preference for children in South and East Asia. In cooperation with UNFPA, his Government planned to host another symposium on population and ageing in the first half of 1996.

29. Mr. AGONA (Uganda), noting that full implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action would help improve the quality of life of Uganda's people, said that his Government had already adopted a national population policy and that a plan of action would soon be implemented.

30. His country was gravely concerned by the spread of HIV/AIDS and was doing its utmost to fight the pandemic. At the same time it believed that UNFPA had a significant contribution to make in that regard, both within its own competence and as a partner in the joint and co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS. Given the nature of the pandemic, his delegation called for more effective collaboration on population information, reproductive rights and health education and communication within the overall context of the Cairo Programme of Action.

31. Regarding the institutional arrangements for the follow-up of the Conference, he said that since it was generally agreed that UNFPA had an important role to play in the implementation of the Programme of Action, it should also be accepted that UNFPA must be given the necessary resources and visibility. In that connection, Uganda believed that there was a case for establishing a separate executive board for UNFPA. At the same time, it supported review of the terms of reference and mandate of the Commission on Population and Development, and the proposed increase in the Commission's membership. Lastly, while recognizing the centrality of the principle of shared responsibility within the United Nations system for the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action, Uganda believed that the distinct visibility of the appropriate lead agency should not be compromised.

32. Mr. ZIAUDDIN (Bangladesh) said that the Programme of Action gave priority to sustained economic growth and development, particularly to the eradication of poverty in developing countries. A clear link having been established between population, unsustainable production and consumption patterns and the environment, developed countries had special responsibility for changing their unsustainable production and consumption patterns.

33. While national governments had rightly been assigned the prime responsibility of formulating and implementing appropriate policies to implement the Programme of Action, their efforts must be supplemented by increased international cooperation. In that regard, the provisions of paragraph 13.16 of the Programme of Action should be translated into action.

34. Women's empowerment and their enhanced participation in development activities should receive special priority in the follow-up activities. In that connection, the Fourth World Conference on Women had re-emphasized the importance of education, primary health care and access to information.

35. Population policies and programmes should be implemented taking into account the special needs of the poor and vulnerable sections of society, and, the Bretton Woods institutions should pay more attention to the social sectors in formulating and implementing structural adjustment measures so as to ensure that economic reform measures did not adversely affect the poor. Similarly, the United Nations should continue to play an important role in the implementation of the Programme of Action.

36. His delegation believed that the membership of the Commission on Population and Development should be increased and also that there was room for better coordination between the Commission, the Population Division and UNFPA.

37. Despite adverse socio-economic indicators, Bangladesh had achieved some tangible successes in the area of population, health care and primary education.

38. Mr. HOSNY (Egypt) said that his delegation supported the proposal of UNFPA to replace its biennial reports on multilateral population assistance by an annual report on the amount of financial resources allocated for the implementation of the Programme of Action at the national and international levels, as outlined in paragraph 13 of the Secretary-General's report (A/50/190), and to refine the current system of monitoring such assistance. There might also be a need to develop a method of assessing the mobilization of domestic resources allocated for population programmes. His delegation also welcomed the steps taken pursuant to General Assembly resolution 49/128 to revitalize the Population Commission, now renamed the Commission on Population and Development, and agreed that its membership should be increased from 28 to 53 and that the Commission should be granted equal status with the other functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.